

3-26-1965

# Remarks of Reverend Robert F. Drinan, S.J., Dean of the Boston College Law School at a dinner of the Constitutional Rights Foundation at the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles, California on Friday, March 26, 1965

Robert F. Drinan, S.J.  
*Boston College Law School*

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Drinan, Robert F., S.J., "Remarks of Reverend Robert F. Drinan, S.J., Dean of the Boston College Law School at a dinner of the Constitutional Rights Foundation at the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles, California on Friday, March 26, 1965" (1965). *Law School Publications*. Paper 134.

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REMARKS OF REVEREND ROBERT F. DRINAN, S. J.  
DEAN OF THE BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL AT  
A DINNER OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION  
AT THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
ON FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 1965, -- ACCEPTING AND  
ACKNOWLEDGING A GRANT OF \$5,000 FROM THE  
CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION TO THE LAWYERS  
CONSTITUTIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE, INC.

The ancient Athenian jurist Solon was once asked how justice could best be secured. Solon replied that justice can be assured only "if those who are not injured feel just as indignant as those who are."

Tonight I salute that indignation at injustice which has impelled each person here to gather together in order to channel your anger and indignation at injustice into positive methods of making known and having enforced the basic rights of all men and the constitutional privileges of every American.

As a churchman and as a lawyer and as a man I stand in admiration of the consistent courage and the calm confidence with which all those associated with the Constitutional Rights Foundation have advocated and implemented the guarantees of the Bill of Rights. It is ennobling and inspiring to read of the campaign, in season and out of season, of the Constitutional Rights Foundation to make known those ringing affirmations and vindications of freedom which wise and courageous men inserted into America's Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights.

As a founder and as a member of the Board of the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee I express to you my admiration and gratitude for the generous grant given last year, -- and renewed much more munificently here tonight -- of the Constitutional Rights Foundation to the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee. Your gift will make possible an extension of the educational and legal work of this group of lawyers which, like your own dedicated organization, was born in the recent past out of the anguish that comes from the knowledge that countless millions of American citizens do not understand and do not observe some of the most fundamental moral rights guaranteed by our nation's basic legal institutions.

The Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee was conceived in the long, hot summer of 1963. It was formed by the top attorneys for the leading civil rights groups in America. Aided by contributions from devoted groups like your own the Lawyers Constitutional Defense



Committee in its very first year of existence sent more than 130 lawyers into the South, -- men and women from all over the nation who were briefed at a two day conference in New York and who offered without compensation their legal services for extensive periods in Southern states to Negroes and whites arrested or harassed because they attempted to exercise their constitutional rights.

In the forthcoming summer that work of representation by the LCDC will continue and, hopefully, will be expanded. Within the recent past LCDC has established a permanent office in Jackson, Mississippi, with a full-time lawyer who will coordinate and carry forward all of the trials and appeals undertaken by the volunteer lawyers under the auspices of the LCDC.

This full-time lawyer in Jackson, Mississippi and his assistants are at this time litigating a major case before a three-judge Federal bench challenging the constitutionality of some 24 Mississippi state laws. In addition counsel for LCDC in Jackson is preparing an anti-trust case against several surety companies who will give bail bonds to all persons accused of crime except those involved in civil rights cases. Action is being advanced also to halt the issuance of Mississippi state and school-district bonds the revenue from which would be used for segregated facilities.

The very idea and the implementation of a plan to bring large numbers of attorneys into direct and active collaboration with the civil rights movement has been described as a turning point and a milestone in the history of the legal profession in America. The conscience of the bar has been awakened. At long last -- and I as an attorney admit it with shame -- more and more lawyers are determined to secure legal representation for millions of our fellow citizens who are deprived of the right to vote and the right to equality of educational opportunity.

Far, far more than 130 lawyers are needed in the South this summer. And far more attorneys are available if the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee can secure adequate

funds to arrange for their deployment. Grants are being received as, for example, a most welcome gift last month of \$10,000 from the Twentieth Century Fund to LCDC. The tragedy is, however, that contributions, too little and too late, may not be sufficient to carry forward and intensify the momentum of last year's victories into a new year in which the full implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 might bring the flood tide of victory for freedom and equality.

My passionate belief in the enormous value of lawyers -- many lawyers -- being present and involved in civil rights matters in the South prompts me to urge each of you to search for ways by which you personally may be able to contribute or to secure funds for this tax-exempt group. These funds will be used so that courageous men and women, white and Negro, Southerners and Northerners, who are harassed and accused under unjust laws may have their conduct and their lives vindicated by the majesty of a fair trial and a just verdict.

Your distinguished organization, the Constitutional Rights Foundation, exists primarily because you, -- its directors and its members, -- burn within with the conviction of the sacredness and the inviolability of those basic human rights by which man is an image of his Creator.

The organization which I represent here tonight -- the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee -- has a parallel purpose -- the vindication in the legal order of those moral rights which are inalienable to human nature and which are solemnly made imprescriptible in America's Bill of Rights.

As a founder and director of this sister organization I express to you our profound admiration for your purposes, our heartfelt gratitude for your princely benefaction to us, -- and our solemn commitment that we will return to you next year, -- with even greater needs!

As a lawyer and as a person I commend your work and your role as the spiritual architects of the moral universe of tomorrow. You are working in an area in which, -- as



in no other, -- the adage of Edmund Burke is true, -- "evil grows because good men do nothing."

Each of us is here tonight because in some way, however indistinctly, we feel deeply that any injustice to any human being is truly an injustice and injury to us and an insult to God. We are hurt and we suffer because our fellow men are denied the right to equality. We know in our hearts and minds, -- profoundly and painfully, -- that when a Negro or a Puerto Rican or any other child of God is humiliated God is humiliated and all of us are outraged.

Accept and nourish therefore as a direct inspiration from God those feelings of indignation which come to you because of the denial of the human dignity and the moral rights of your fellow citizens.

Deepen this indignation within your heart because justice will not come unless those who are not hurt, in the words of the Athenian jurist Solon, "feel just as indignant as those who are."